



National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Voyageurs National Park

3131 Highway 53
International Falls, MN
56649-8956

218-283-6600 phone
218-285-7407 fax

Voyageurs National Park News Release

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For Immediate Release

Kathleen Przybylski (218) 283- 6612

VOYAGEURS NATIONAL PARK RECEIVES FUNDING FOR 49-PASSENGER TOUR BOAT FOR RAINY LAKE

By 2010, Voyageurs National Park will once again have a 49- passenger tour boat on Rainy Lake to serve park visitors. Acting Superintendent Raoul Lufbery is pleased to announce that Voyageurs National Park received \$1.4 million to build a 49- passenger tour boat for Rainy Lake. The funding for the boat comes from the 2008 Federal Lands Highway Category III - Alternative Transportation Program.

The success of this funding request is a result of a cooperative effort by park partners, local government, and the park. The park's funding request included letters of support from the City of International Falls, Koochiching County Board of Commissioners, Voyageurs National Park Association, Friends of Voyageurs National Park, and the International Falls, Rainer, and Rainy Lake Convention and Visitors Bureau. These organizations consider tour/shuttle boat operations to be a linchpin to the tourism sector of the region. Congressman Jim Oberstar also supports this project through his Chairmanship of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure.

This tour boat will allow the park to restore consistent tour boat and charter services on Rainy Lake. These services have been inconsistent since *The Pride of Rainy Lake*, owned and operated by Bob and Mary Hilke, left Rainy Lake nearly ten years ago. The boat will accommodate full class-size school groups for field trips into the park. The boat could be used for charter events that highlight the park's significance. The park would also be able to accommodate requests for special tour/shuttles in support of community events. Planned interpreter- led tour boat programs include a cruise about the Rainy Lake gold rush, including a stop at a historic gold mine site; a cruise into the back bays and protected areas of Rainy Lake that are abundant with wildlife; a sunset cruise that highlights bald eagles and the park's significant scenery; and a 35- mile boat trip to the Kettle Falls Historic District. The park plans to eventually have a concessioner operate the tour boat.

Lufbery believes the new vessel can certainly serve as the new passenger flagship for Rainy Lake and the park. The main staging area for the boat will be the Rainy Lake Visitor Center. However, after the proposed Voyageurs Heritage Center is built, expectations are that some charter and educational trips would originate from that "port of call."

(more)

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The 50-foot long tour boat will be an all-weather, fully accessible 49 passenger alternative- fuel tour boat with advanced bio- diesel engine technology. Passengers can view the park's wildlife, geology and scenery from an enclosed lower deck or an open-air upper deck. The two engines used for drive power will be Cummins QSC 8.3 with a computerized rail fuel distribution system which are more fuel efficient, cleaner "green engines," that meet the latest requirements of the Federal EPA standards for emissions. Fuel used will be either a bio- diesel 80/20 or 70/30 blend. Advanced engineered "tunnels with props" will be used for propulsion to increase fuel savings. Naval Architect projections show a 40% efficiency in fuel use with tunnels and props when compared with standard jet drive propulsion systems.

A hydraulic steering system along with side- power bow thrusters will be installed for better vessel handling and assisting with docking in high wind conditions. The vessel under maximum loaded conditions will draft 3'- 4" making it very usable in most shallow water back channels.

A 3KV electric engine inverter with battery backup will be used to power boat accessories and appliances. This system will save additional energy when compared with a traditional stand alone electric generator.

Through project funding, a naval architect completed design specifications for the boat in 2007. Now the National Park Service will solicit for a contractor to build the boat. If all goes as planned the park will offer programs on the new tour boat starting in June 2010.

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